

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03

RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 RSR-01 EUR-25 PM-07 NSC-10

SS-15 /103 W

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R 040949Z SEPT 73

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7759

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, RP

SUBJECT: DEATH OF CARDINAL SANTOS

1. RUFINO CARDINAL SANTOS, SPIRITUAL LEADER OF THE PHILIPPINES ' 33 MILLION ROMAN CATHOLICS, DIED OF A HEART ATTACK IN MANILA ON SEPT 3. CARDINAL SANTOS, 65, HAD BEEN HOSPITALIZED IN SERIOUS CONDITION SINCE AN EARLIER STROKE ON JUNE 29. HE WILL BE BURIED ON SEPT 10 AT THE MANILA CATHEDRAL.

2. THE 12TH OF 14 CHILDREN OF TENANT FARMERS IN CENTRAL LUZON, SANTOS ROSE TO BE ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL INDIVIDUALS IN THE PHILS, AND, PARADOXICALLY, AN ALLY OF THE MOST CONSERVATIVE GROUPS IN THE COUNTRY. HE BECAME ARCHBISHOP OF MANILA IN 1958 AND THUS HEAD OF MOST POPULOUS, WEALTHY AND INFLUENTIAL ARCHDIOCESE IN PHILS. HE WAS NAMED THE FIRST FILIPINO CARDINAL BY POPE JOHN XXIII IN 1960.

3. SANTOS WON A REPUTATION AS A MANGAGER AND BUILDER, WHO ADROITLY ADMINISTERED THE EXTENSIVE FINANCIAL AND PROPERTY HOLDINGS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE. WIDELY RESPECTED FOR HIS PERSONAL QUALITIES, HIS CONSERVATIVE --ALMOST

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REACTIONARY --APPROACH TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS  
MADE HIM A FREQUENT TARGET OF CRITICISM IN RECENT  
YEARS BY LIBERAL ELEMENTS WHO BELIEVED THE INFLUENTIAL  
PHILIPPINE CHURCH SHOULD BECOME MORE ATTUNED TO THE  
NEEDS OF THE POOR. HE WAS CRITICIZED FOR BEING MORE  
INTERESTED IN SAVING SOULS THAN FEEDING PEOPLE OR  
IMPROVING THEIR TEMPORAL CONDITION.

4. COMMENT: THE DEATH OF SANTOS LEAVES THE KEY POSITION  
OF ARCHBISHOP OF MANILA VACANT UNTIL POPE PAUL APPOINTS  
A SUCCESSOR. SANTOS' OPPOSITION TO "SOCIAL ACTION"  
PROGRAMS, WHICH HE FREQUENTLY EXPRESSED IN HEAVY-HANDED  
FASHION , DID MUCH TO PERPETUATE THE CHURCH'S IMAGE AS  
A CONSERVATIVE ORGANIZATION, ALLIED WITH THE COUNTRY'S  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ELITE. HIS DEATH COULD RESULT IN  
WEAKENING OF THE DOMINANT CONSERVATIVE ELEMENT OF THE  
CHURCH AND ENCOURAGE LIBERALS TO PUSH THEIR IDEAS HARDER.  
ONE OF THE LEADING CANDIDATES TO SUCCEED SANTOS IS  
BISHOP MARIANO GAVIOLA, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE CATHOLIC  
BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF THE PHILIPPINES, WHO, WHILE NOT  
A MEMBER OF THE LIBERAL WING, IS CONSIDERED MUCH LESS  
CONSERVATIVE THAN SANTOS AND HAS THE IMPORTANT ADVANTAGE  
OF BEING CLOSE TO PRESIDENT AND MRS. MARCOS.  
SULLIVAN

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NNN

\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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